



Congressman Joseph Crowley

**A Report to the People of
the Seventh Congressional District
of New York**

Spring/Summer 2000



Congressman Joseph Crowley

Fighting to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs for Seniors

Congressman Crowley Fighting for a Prescription Drug Benefit for Medicare

For senior citizens who do not have private medical insurance and who depend on Medicare to provide healthcare coverage, buying prescription drugs can be a choice between paying for life saving drugs or paying the rent.

Congressman Crowley conducted a study of local pharmacies and found that seniors in Queens and the Bronx pay almost twice as much for prescription drugs than their neighbors in Canada and Mexico. In addition insurance companies continue to rack up record breaking profits by charging seniors without insurance excessive prices while their favored customers receive sweetheart deals.

Congressman Crowley is working to change that!

Congressman Crowley is a supporter of the Medicare Prescription Drug Act of 2000. This plan would establish a voluntary prescription benefit to Medicare for seniors beginning in 2002. The bill would pay 50% of out of pocket prescription drug costs for seniors and would limit maximum out of pocket expenses for prescription drugs to \$3000 a year. Additionally he is leading the charge to reduce the overall costs of prescription drugs by supporting the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act. If passed into law, this bill would decrease the cost of medications for seniors by 40% immediately without cost to taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership refuses to bring this common sense proposal to the House floor for debate. Congressman Crowley will continue to work with his colleagues to fight for the passage of a prescription drug benefit for seniors this year.

Congressman Crowley will continue to fight to make prescription drugs more affordable for New York Seniors.



Congressman Crowley addresses seniors at North Flushing Senior Center on his efforts to reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

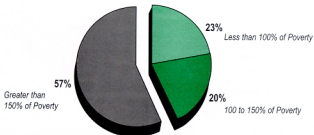


At a Bronx Town Hall, Congressman Crowley is saluted as "A Friend of Seniors" by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare for his work in Congress to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Most Uninsured Are Not Low Income

Over half of the 12 million Medicare beneficiaries who lack drug coverage have incomes greater than 150% of poverty (nearly \$17,000 per couple).

Income of Beneficiaries without Drug Coverage, 1996
(as a percent of poverty)

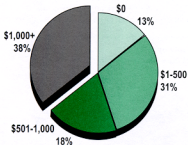


SOURCE: Data from DHHS (April 2000). Prescription Drug Coverage, Spending, Utilization, and Prices. Washington, DC, US DHHS. In 2000, 150% of poverty for a single person is about \$12,525, for a couple is about \$16,875.

Insurance Gaps for Medicare Beneficiaries

Over one-third of Medicare beneficiaries spend more than \$1,000 annually on prescription drugs.

Beneficiaries by total drug spending, 2000



SOURCE: Actuarial Research Corporation for HHS, projected for 2000.

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Eliminates Social Security Earnings Limit and Phone Tax

Who says the Federal Government doesn't put money in your pocket?

The economy is booming, the Federal budget is in surplus and Congressman Crowley is working with his colleagues to update the tax code to return more money to the pockets of New Yorkers.

To help seniors who choose to stay working a little longer, the House of Representatives passed, and President Clinton signed into law, legislation supported by Congressman Crowley to repeal the Social Security Earnings Limit for seniors between ages 65-69.

Until the recent change in law, seniors who claimed Social Security benefits before the age of 70 were subject to a reduction in benefits if they continued to work. For seniors 65 to 69, benefits were reduced by \$1 for every \$3 that their earnings exceeded the limit of \$17,000 in 2000.

Congressman Crowley supported the repeal of the unfair earnings limit and was invited to the White House when the bill was signed into law. For seniors who work and were subject to the earnings limit you will be receiving a check retroactive to January 1st of this year. If you have any questions please contact Congressman Crowley's Queens or Bronx District Offices at 718-779-1400 (Queens) or 718-931-1400 (Bronx).

In addition, Congressman Crowley joined his colleagues in passing a repeal of the Federal Excise Tax on your telephone bill. This outdated law was put on the books in 1898 to finance the Spanish American War. Even though we won that war, the tax has stayed on the books adding 3% to the phone bill of every American. Congressman Crowley was proud to join his colleagues to repeal this outrageous and outdated tax.



Congressman Crowley (second from left) joins colleagues from the House Committee on Ways and Means at the White House when President Clinton signed the repeal of the Social Security Earnings Limit for seniors between ages 65-69 into law.